Author: Percival Wilde
Title of the Story: *The Hour of Truth*
Theme: The play highlights the value of honesty, integrity, and moral courage. It shows how a man stands firm on his principles, even when tempted by money, family pressure, and emotional arguments. It teaches that true character is revealed in moments of moral testing — the real "hour of truth."

Paragraph:

In *The Hour of Truth*, Percival Wilde narrates a tense moral drama centred around Robert Baldwin, a loyal secretary to his old friend John Gresham, who is facing trial for misappropriating funds in his bank. Baldwin, the only witness against Gresham, is called to testify in court. A day before the trial, Gresham tempts him with a huge bribe of **one hundred thousand dollars** to simply say "**I don't remember**" when asked certain questions. Accepting this would save Gresham from jail, but it would mean compromising Baldwin's honesty. Initially, Baldwin's wife Martha, son John, and daughter Evie admire his integrity. However, as they realise the amount of money involved, they begin justifying Gresham's offer, calling it "compensation" for years of underpayment. They try to persuade Baldwin to accept, arguing that nobody lost any money and that it would protect the family's reputation.Baldwin is shocked and hurt by his family's change of attitude. Calling them **"shams, liars, hypocrites, thieves"**, he reminds them that taking the money would be dishonourable, no matter how they tried to excuse it. He refuses, saying, **"I'll go to my grave clean."** His moral stand is firm — even against the pressure of his loved ones.The climax comes when Mr. Marshall, President of another bank, visits unexpectedly. He offers Baldwin a job and reveals surprising news: Gresham has confessed his guilt rather than face Baldwin's honest testimony. Marshall praises Baldwin, saying every man will respect him for his integrity. The play ends with Baldwin relieved, his honour intact, and his principles rewarded.Through this powerful one-act play, Percival Wilde shows that the real "hour of truth" is when a person must choose between personal gain and moral duty. Baldwin's choice proves that **honesty is worth more than all the money in the world**, and that true respect comes from standing firm on what is right.